

NOTE

The Status of *Darmistidus* Uhler (Hemiptera: Rhopalidae)

In 1893 Uhler described *Darmistidus maculatus* new genus and species, for four specimens (one headless) from St. Vincent in the West Indies; these four are syntypes. Writing “[c]losely related to *Stachyocnemus*,” and perhaps influenced by the reduced metathoracic scent gland apparatus of both genera, Uhler (1893: 707) placed *Darmistidus* in the alydid subfamily Alydinae. There it rested until Barber (1926), studying the headless syntype in the National Museum of Natural History (Washington, D.C.), synonymized it with *Xenogenus* Berg, a genus in the Rhopalidae (Rhopalinae: Chorosomatini); Rhopalidae is a family characterized (in part) by a reduced metathoracic scent gland apparatus. Barber (1926) also synonymized the species (*maculatus*) with *X. extensum* Distant. Torre-Bueno (1941) in his synopsis, followed Barber. Göllner-Scheiding, who also saw, and dissected, a syntype, agreed with this generic synonymy in her revision of *Xenogenus* (1980), and again in her catalog of the Rhopalidae (1983). She further synonymized *X. extensum* with *Xenogenus picturatum* Berg (Göllner-Scheiding 1980). Thus, both *Darmistidus maculatus* Uhler and *Xenogenus extensum* Distant are now junior synonyms of *Xenogenus picturatum* Berg. However, none of these authors commented on how Uhler’s *Darmistidus* differs from Alydidae, or indeed from *Stachyocnemus*.

Several syntypes of *D. maculatus* are in The Natural History Museum (London), and the headless syntype is in the National Museum of Natural History (Washington, D.C.). One of the London syntypes has been dissected, presumably by Göllner-Scheiding.

As a brief exercise in the clearing away of taxonomic underbrush, I have examined

an undissected male syntype (from The Natural History Museum, London) of *Darmistidus maculatus*. Here I agree, and explain why, that the species is not related to the alydine *Stachyocnemus*, that it is indeed a rhopalid, and that it belongs in *Xenogenus*.

*Darmistidus maculatus* Uhler not an alydine

- 1) Although the head is somewhat elongate, as in many rhopalids, it is not nearly so elongate as are the heads of alydines; that is, the length-to-width ratio is greater in alydines than it is in rhopalids and than it is here in *Darmistidus maculatus*.
- 2) The hind femora are only very slightly incrassate. The hind femora of Alydinae are much more incrassate.
- 3) The trichobothria of the sixth abdominal sternum are arranged in a horizontal line (a rhopalid characteristic) rather than in a triangle as in Alydidae (see Schaefer 1975).
- 4) *Darmistidus maculatus* is small for an alydine. At 6.76 mm., it is much smaller than even *Tollius* spp., which are certainly the slightest (narrowest and shortest) of the New World Alydinae, and I believe of all Alydinae.

*Darmistidus maculatus* not closely related to *Stachyocnemus*

- 1) *Stachyocnemus* contains a single species (see Schaefer and Schaffner 1997). The genus is distinguished from all other New World alydines by the two rows of spines on the hind femora (Schaffner 1965, Schaefer, in press). *Darmistidus* lacks these spines, although if closely related the genus might be expected to have them.
- 2) *Stachyocnemus apicalis* is a more robust species than *Darmistidus maculatus*, and

Alydinae is a subfamily the species in whose genera do not vary in robustness. Again, a genus closely related to *Stachyocnemus* might perhaps be closer in overall form and size. (Length/width: *Stachyocnemus* = 3.26 [n = 4], *Darmistidus* = 3.75 [n = 1].)

- 3) The humeral angles of *Stachyocnemus* are sharp (but not extended), whereas those of *Darmistidus* are rounded.
- 4) *Stachyocnemus* is essentially a Nearctic genus, although it occurs in Mexico (Froeschner 1988) and Cuba (Schaefer and Schaffner 1997). It is unlikely, although not impossible, that a species "[c]losely related to *Stachyocnemus*" (Uhler 1893: 707) would be found in St. Vincent, so far from any recorded locale of *Stachyocnemus*.

Note: The evidence that *Darmistidus* is not an alydine is stronger than the evidence that it is not a *Stachyocnemus*. This is to be expected, because Uhler described his *Darmistidus* as a separate genus, and therefore one not identical—but merely closely related—to *Stachyocnemus*. Demonstrating differences between the two therefore proves at best only that they may not be closely related. However, the fact that *Darmistidus* does not belong to the same subfamily as *Stachyocnemus*, renders the former argument moot.

*Darmistidus maculatus* a rhopalid

- 1) The genital capsule of the male is retracted into the seventh segment, whose external (posterior) opening is triangular. Although not a universal characteristic of rhopalids, this occurs often in this family and rarely in other coreoid families (Schaefer, unpublished).
- 2) The lateral rims of the genital capsule have the paralateral lobes considered to be characteristic of the Rhopalidae (Chopra 1967, Schaefer 1978).
- 3) There is some red mottling, and some red blotching, of the specimen. This oc-

curs in other families, but is particularly common in Rhopalidae: Rhopalinae.

- 4) The metepimeron and metepisternum are fused and enlarged, forming a flange which extends somewhat back over the abdomen. This too occurs in most rhopalids.

Note: In most Alydinae the metathoracic scent gland opening and peritreme are prominent. In most Rhopalidae they are much reduced or apparently absent. They are apparently absent in *Xenogenus* and—unlike the situation in other alydines—in *Stachyocnemus* also. This similarity may have influenced Uhler's placing of his new genus near *Stachyocnemus*, although he does not mention this in his description.

*Darmistidus maculatus* is a true species of *Xenogenus*

The male syntype before me keys to *Xenogenus* in Chopra's key (1967) to genera, and it agrees it all respects with the description of *Xenogenus* in Göllner-Scheiding's revision of the genus (1980) and with the characters I listed in restoring the genus from Harmostini (see Brailovsky and Soria 1980) to Chorosomatini (Schaefer 1994). There can be no doubt that Barber (1926) and Göllner-Scheiding (1980) correctly removed *Darmistidus* from Alydidae, and correctly placed it in the rhopalid genus *Xenogenus*.

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Carl W. Schaefer, *Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Connecticut, Storrs CT 06269-3043, U.S.A. (e-mail: schaefer@uconnvm.uconn.edu)*